

Message Text

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14

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 IO-13 ACDA-07 /069 W

----- 046010

O R 040945Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8034

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

PLEASE PASS SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, BC, RH

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION PARTY CALLS FOR BORDER CLOSURE

1. MAY 4 ISSUE OF GOVERNMENT PUBLISHED BOTSWANA DAILY NEWS
CARRIES REPORT OF MEETING MAY 2 OF OPPOSITION BOTSWANA NATIONAL
FRONT (BNF) WHICH CALLED ON THE BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT TO CLOSE ITS
BORDER WITH RHODESIA BEFORE QUOTE THE RAILWAY LINE IS DESTROYED BY
THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS END QUOTE. THE STORY GOES ON TO REPORT BNF
OFFICIAL GIDDIE AS SAYING THAT IF THE GOVERNMENT COULD CLOSE THE
BORDER THE UNITED NATIONS WILL HELP BOTSWANA BECAUSE BOTSWANA WILL
BE COMPLYING WITH ITS SANCTIONS ON RHODESIA BUT IF THE RAIL IS
QUOTE DESTROYED BY FREEDOM FIGHTERS THE UNITED NATIONS MIGHT
BE RELUCTANT TO HELP END QUOTE. GIDDIE ADDED THAT BOTSWANA WILL
BE CREATING BETTER FUTURE RELATIONS WITH THE WOULD-BE GOVERN-
MENTS (SIC) OF THE NATIONALISTS. GIDDIE IS ALSO QUOTED AS TELLING
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THE GATHERING THAT QUOTE THE BNF REJECTS THE AMERICAN SECRETARY

OF STATE DR. H. KISSINGER'S AFRICAN TOUR END QUOTE.

2. AS IS OFTEN THE CASE, THE ARTICLE THEN GOES ON TO PRESENT THE GOVERNMENT POSITION ON THE QUESTION INVOLVED. IT REPORTS THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF BOTSWANA HAS QUOTE TAKEN A DECISION TO TAKE OVER THE RHODESIAN RAILROADS IN BOTSWANA END QUOTE. IT RECALLS THAT PRESIDENT SIR SERETSE KHAMA HAS A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS SAID QUOTE WE WOULD END UP HURTING OURSELVES MORE THAN RHODESIA END QUOTE (WITH REGARD TO THE BORDER CLOSURE). WITH REFERENCE TO THE USE OF THE RAILROAD, PRESIDENT KHAMA IS REPORTED AS SAYING THAT THE LINE PASSING THROUGH BOTSWANA CARRIES TWENTY PER CENT OF RHODESIA-SOUTH AFRICA TRAFFIC, THE OTHER EIGHTY PER CENT GOING THROUGH THE BEITBRIDGE CONNECTION.

3. IN REVIEWING THE RECENT VISIT OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECOLONISATION COMMITTEE, THE STORY QUOTES ITS CHAIRMAN AS SAYING THAT QUOTE THE UNITED NATIONS CANNOT ASK BOTSWANA TO CLOSE THE RHODESIA RAILWAY LINE BECAUSE THAT WILL BE TANTAMOUNT TO SUICIDE. THE UNITED NATIONS IS FULLY AWARE OF BOTSWANA'S POSITION END QUOTE.

4. COMMENT: THE BNF MEETING IN QUESTION WAS MENTIONED TO CHARGE IN PASSING BY EXTERNAL AFFAIRS SECRETARY CHARLES TIBONE ON MAY 2. TIBONE HAD JUST PASSED BY THE MEETING AND HEARD PORTIONS OF WHAT APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN GIDDIES'S STATEMENT. HE MENTIONED THAT MEETING IN CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM OF POSSIBLE CRITICISMS OF BOTSWANA FOR NOT CLOSING THE BORDER.

THOMSEN

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